

# EquiChallenge - Groundwork Program

EquiChallenge Groundwork is a program, developed by Janice Green of JBar4 Ranch, Watkins, CO, designed to motivate handlers to further their bond and communication with their horse through playing with and achieving specific performances from their horse. These performances are broken down into attainable levels. The skills asked for in these levels are not all-inclusive to what you and your horse might achieve, but the requirements in each level are specific enough to guide you to higher levels of horsemanship.

Each level will have a list of specific maneuvers that the handler will be asked to demonstrate with their horse. The handler is encouraged to attend individual or group lessons in order to learn the mechanics of each maneuver and how to successfully execute them. The handler then practices the maneuvers on their own until such time that a high level of competency has been reached. They may then schedule a time to demonstrate that competency before a judge with the goal of receiving a passing score for each maneuver. If asked, the judge may remind the handler of the specifics of each maneuver. Maneuvers at each level do not necessarily have to be carried out in the order in which they are listed.

Each maneuver will be judged a **PASS** or **RE-DO**. The objective is to receive a pass score on each maneuver from the list. With a pass score of all maneuvers listed, the horse and handler may move on to the next level of groundwork. If any maneuver was judged a re-do, only those maneuvers will need to be re-tested at later date. Testing is done on an individual basis when handler feels ready.

Handler may use any type of basic halter and lead rope. A cueing wand is permissible.

## **A passing score is an evaluation of the following criteria:**

### **maintaining gaits**

- \_\_ same energy the entire circle
- \_\_ relaxed

### **gait transitions**

- \_\_ responsiveness to handler cue
- \_\_ life and energy
- \_\_ softness
- \_\_ straightness in some maneuvers - backing, pivots, side pass
- \_\_ pivot on fore for turn in

### **handler positioning and effectiveness**

- \_\_\_ energy
- \_\_\_ placement, static position (horse/handler not getting ahead)
- \_\_\_ rope handling skills
- \_\_\_ when leading between shoulder and eye
- \_\_\_ when leading - body language cues only, horse first then rider
- \_\_\_ guide under midline
- \_\_\_ holding rope in safe position

### **communication with light cues**

- \_\_\_ moving off pressure both directly/indirectly ( no voice commands during testing)
- \_\_\_ position of cue i.e., (shoulder, head, hip)

### **horse's attitude and responsiveness**

- \_\_\_ horse responds quickly with light cues
- \_\_\_ looks for direction from the handler
- \_\_\_ relaxed

### **maneuvers performed**

- \_\_\_ show horse can give to pressure and lower head in a relaxed manner
- \_\_\_ use this to relax and reward horse if they are getting worried